

FOCUS

A Look at the Maricopa County Juvenile Court



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Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County

Winter 2000 Edition

Kids Rest Safe in Lockup

State and county funds used to build more sleeping quarters after years of unsafe overcrowding

The recently completed expansion of Juvenile Court detention facilities is resolving past overcrowding problems and helping assure safety for its juvenile tenants.

Overcrowded conditions at the Durango Juvenile Detention Center, 3125 W. Durango, in Phoenix, were eased with the completion of an 80-bed expansion, bringing the detention population under capacity for the first time in several years. And while Juvenile Court officials and others celebrate the new addition, plans for further detention and court expansion promise to enhance the quality and quantity of court services far into the future.

"Maricopa County is one of the fastest growing counties in the U.S. Our youth population has been projected to increase 30 percent over the next 10 years," said Cheryl Townsend, Director of Juvenile Court Services. "The sheer growth in popu-

lation is simply outgrowing our capacity, in terms of facilities and programs. We probably outgrew our existing facilities by 1994, and that gets compounded every year."

Future plans call for construction of as many as 220 more beds at Durango and renovation at the Southeast Juvenile Facility for 120 additional beds. The Southeast facility is at 1810 S. Lewis, Mesa.

Ken Bond, Assistant Director of Juvenile Court Services, said the expansion provides an opportunity for Juvenile Court to enhance current juvenile offender programs and opens the door for the creation of more cost-effective and innovative programs.

"We are going to see about developing more alternatives to detention," Bond said. "Detention is very expensive. If we can find continuums along the way that don't require detention, we'll probably be using them."

Bond said one possibil-

Officials Praise Expansion Effort



Left: Arizona Supreme Court Chief Justice Thomas Zlaket speaks at the dedication of the Durango Juvenile Detention Center expansion.

Below: Juvenile Court Services Director Cheryl Townsend leads a tour of the new 80-bed Juvenile Detention wing.

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ity might be to increase home detention options while creating day and evening facilities where juveniles can report.

"We want to eliminate overcrowding and present the judges with a full range of options," Bond said, adding that the plans at Durango feature a sepa-

rate 48-bed residential treatment facility for juveniles with special needs. The treatment center likely will be built on land adjacent to the Juvenile Court Center. "We're hoping, by having some treatment beds, to really do some-

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80-bed Detention Expansion Dedicated

Private locked rooms are again standard issue at the Durango Juvenile Detention Facility. It's not luxurious, but it's a significant improvement after overcrowding for more than two years forced juveniles to sleep on mattresses scattered across the facility's floor space.

During the past few years, the need for beds in juvenile detention surpassed availability of bed space, at times forcing as many as 50 juveniles to sleep on the floor -- creating potential danger to juvenile detainees as well as staff.

That is no longer the case.

The recent completion of an 80-bed expansion project, brings the total to 229 beds at the Durango facility, 3125 W. Durango. Detention officials are finally able to comply with state law requiring each juvenile to have his or her own private, locked room in which to sleep.

State and county leaders lauded the completion of expansion efforts Durango Juvenile Detention facility during a dedication ceremony in the detention gymnasium.

Arizona Supreme Court Chief Justice Thomas A. Zlaket was one of several court and county officials attending the dedication. As the keynote speaker, Zlaket commended the expansion and the safety it gives the juveniles and detention staff.

Others who participated in the dedication included George Weisz, Executive Assistant to Governor Jane Hull, Maricopa County Board of Supervisors Chairman Andrew Kunasek, Superior Court Presiding Judge Robert Myers and



Officials cut the ribbon leading into the expanded wing at the Durango Juvenile Detention Center. From left: Superior Court Presiding Judge Robert Myers, Arizona Supreme Court Chief Justice Thomas Zlaket, Presiding Juvenile Court Judge Maurice Portley, Administrative Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts David Byers and Chairman of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors Andrew Kunasek.

Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Maurice Portley.



Chairman of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors Andrew Kunasek (left) and George Weisz, Executive Assistant to Governor Jane Hull.

Administrative Office of the Courts and the County Board of Supervisors to

meet the current juvenile justice needs in order to protect the community and help the youngsters referred to the Juvenile Court."

The expansion blends with the building's original design and features four new 20-bed units.

The construction also added four classrooms and a multipurpose room, which can be used as a training room or a dining room, and a variety of other purposes.

The project broke ground in January and took 10 months to complete. It was built with county and state funds. Juveniles were housed in the units beginning in November.

The project cost approximately \$4.9 million. Maricopa County contributed \$3.4 million. Another \$1.3 million came from a State Aid to Detention Grant fund and the State Juvenile Crime Reduction Fund Grant provided \$250,000.

JUVENILE COURT NEWS BRIEFS



Presiding Judge Portley Joins Distinguished List

Presiding Juvenile Court Judge Maurice Portley was recently selected "Man of the Year" by the Valley Leadership Program.

Judge Portley joins a distinguished group of past recipients of Valley Leadership's annual honor, which recognizes exemplary involvement in the community outside of the individuals' everyday jobs.

"I am surprised, humbled and honored at being selected as the Man of the Year 2000 by Valley Leadership," Judge Portley said. "I hope that with the honor, issues confronting children and families will stay in the forefront and be addressed for the healthy future of our community."

Valley Leadership was founded in 1979, and now has more than 1,000 members. Each year, the leadership program selects 45 members for a nine-month program providing in-depth exposure to critical issues facing the community.

Among the past 50 "Man of the Year" honorees are former Scottsdale Mayor Herb Drinkwater, former U.S. Senator Barry Goldwater, Sports Mogul Jerry Colangelo and Phoenix Businessman Eddie Basha. Among the 48 women who have received the "Woman of the Year" distinction are U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, former Governor Rose Mofford, writer Erma Bombeck and former Phoenix Mayor Margaret Hance.

New, Familiar Faces On Bench



The unprecedented addition of several seats on the Superior Court in Maricopa County bench has led to several changes to the list of Juvenile Court judges.

The Juvenile Court Department recently added four judges to its ranks amid the flurry of judicial appointments made by Governor Jane Hull.

Recently appointed judges **Margaret Downie, Emmet Ronan, Eileen Willett** and **Penny Willrich** join the Juvenile Court roster.

Judge Margaret Downie was serving as a Juvenile Court Commissioner when she was appointed to the bench in December 1999. Judge Downie joined the bench as a commissioner in August, 1997 and is currently assigned to the Durango Juvenile Court facility, where she served as a commissioner. Prior to becoming a commissioner, Judge Downie served as Chief Counsel to the State Bar of Arizona.

Judge Eileen Willett also served as a Juvenile Court Commissioner before Governor Hull appointed her as a judge in November 1999.

Judge Willett is currently assigned to the Durango Juvenile Court facility, where she also served as a commissioner. She

became a Superior Court commissioner in April 1998. Immediately before becoming a commissioner, she was Chief Administrative Law Judge with the Industrial Commission of Arizona.

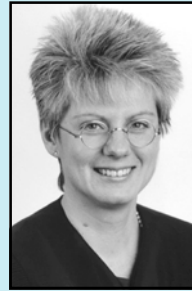
Judge Penny Willrich was appointed in September 1999 and is currently assigned to the Southeast Juvenile Court facility. Prior to her

appointment, Judge Willrich served as a commissioner in both the Criminal and Juvenile Departments. Judge Willrich worked as a pro tem judge for Superior Court prior to her appointment as a commissioner in 1995.

The newest face in Juvenile Court is that of Judge Emmet Ronan, who was appointed in January 1999. Judge Ronan's legal career concentrated on defense work. He was a

deputy Public Defender immediately before his appointment to the bench. He is assigned to the Southeast Juvenile Court facility.

Other changes in Juvenile Court include the departure of Judges **Alfred Fenzel** and **James Padish**. Both, served as Juvenile Court Commissioners immediately before being ap-



Willett



Willrich



Downie

pointed to judgeships. Judge Fenzel and Judge Padish were appointed as judges in November of 1999. Both currently preside over criminal calendars.

First local Juvenile Drug Court Judge Shares Expertise At Conference

As the architect of the Juvenile Drug Court in Maricopa County, Superior Court Judge John Foreman has experienced firsthand how difficult it can be to conquer juvenile substance abuse problems and how challenging it is to try to craft a court program that can successfully provide help.

Foreman had little to go on while initiating the Juvenile Drug Court Program in 1997. He had to rely on existing programs with no more than two years of practical application throughout the country.

"There is no place you can go to find a blueprint. People are still experimenting," Foreman said, noting the oldest drug courts have existed a mere five years. "We've found juvenile drug courts and family drug courts are much more complicated than adult drug courts because you have people outside the courtroom that have a significant impact on the outcome."

Foreman, who presides over a Juvenile Drug Court calendar once a week, spoke of his experience and shared his drug court expertise with hundreds of participants in the First Juvenile and Family Drug Court Training Conference, which was held in January in downtown Phoenix. The conference included workshops, panel discussions and keynote presentations.

Foreman participated on two



Superior Court in Maricopa County Judge John Foreman (left) shared his expertise implementing Drug Court programs during the Juvenile and Family Drug Court Training Conference in downtown Phoenix.

panels that discussed critical elements of juvenile and family drug courts and the judges role, respectively. He credited the conference as a valuable tool in creating a map through the relatively uncharted waters of Juvenile Drug Court.

"How do you deal with a kid who has a substance abuse problem, when the kid goes home to a family member who has a substance abuse problem?" Foreman asked. "Developmentally, kids are different

than adults. They require immediacy in sanctions ... but due process takes time."

Foreman said one difficulty in applying a juvenile drug court program to a community, is that some communities' needs vary depending on local law and legal culture.

The first Juvenile Drug Court was started in Florida in 1994 modeled after adult drug court, which was

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Expansion, from Page 1

thing positive with the kids."

The treatment facility may also be used to shelter troubled juveniles, seeking a safe harbor even though they do not need treatment or are not in trouble with the law.

The future expansion of the Durango Juvenile Court Center is planned to include a two-story building to the west of existing structures, and will incorporate 12 courtrooms

and space for Court Administration, the Clerk of the Court, the Public Defender's Office and the County Attorney's Office.

At the Southeast Facility in Mesa, renovation is planned to create 120 more detention beds, more space for Court Administration and one new courtroom.

All construction and renovation is tentatively scheduled for comple-

tion in December, 2002.

County voters approved funding for the new court facility and detention expansion in the 1998 election with the passage of Propositions 400 and 401. Voter approval authorized a nine-year jail tax, projected to raise \$900 million. It is estimated that about \$60 million of the jail tax will be used for Juvenile Court construction projects.

Waiting Area Provides Playful Oasis For Children

The dedication ceremony for the children's waiting area at the Southeast Mesa Juvenile Court Center sorely tested the patience of one of its first customers.

The silent glare from a little girl let the group of judges, lawyers and officials know they were standing in a spot that would be better put to use if they stepped aside to let her romp joyfully with the awaiting stuffed animals, toy pickup trucks and toy guitar that lights up while playing a tune.

As the celebrants cleared the way for the eager child, they watched as the waiting area met its purpose to entertain a child while parents and siblings engaged in necessary court business.

"Children have a very hard time sitting in a chair and being quiet for extended periods of time," said Cheryln Townsend, Director of Juvenile Court Services. "The waiting area offers a place to play, to read, and to simply be a child. It has reduced the tension and the noise in our waiting area."

Although it occupies only a small area in the corner of the main lobby,

the children's waiting area was no small effort.

The Maricopa County Bar Association (MCBA) Young Lawyers Division initiated the concept of a children's waiting area in Superior Court more than three years ago.

After meetings and discussions, it became a mutual effort of young lawyers and Juvenile Court officials. While serving as Juvenile Court Presiding Judge, John Foreman lent

his support to developing a children's waiting room. A change in presiding judges in 1998 did not disrupt the planning, and Judge Maurice Portley continued providing court support for the project after taking over the duties of Juvenile Court Presiding Judge. When hurdles arose, solutions were mutually worked out. Eventually the

dream became reality.

"The children's waiting area is meant to help the families have a safe diversion for their children while the court provides a needed service to the community," said Margaret Gillespie, MCBA chairperson of the Committee on Children.

The small carpeted area features toys of all kinds and is flanked by walls with brightly colored paint and children's decorations. The area is unsupervised by court staff, but is in plain sight of

parents waiting in the lobby.

The project was funded by a \$500 grant and donations of the toys and other items.

A children's waiting area is included in the plans for the Juvenile Court complex addition, in Phoenix, near the existing facility at 3125 W. Durango, in Phoenix. The expansion is scheduled for completion in 2002.



Juvenile Drug Court, from Page 4

started in 1992. Foreman said the issues involved in the Juvenile Drug Court program pose challenges nonexistent in adult drug courts.

Elements unique to the Juvenile Drug Court Program include intensive supervision, immediate consequences, frequent judicial review, community partnerships, frequent drug tests and family participation.

"Juvenile Drug Court holds the promise of being able to save society and the justice system tremendous amounts of money in the long term, as opposed to juvenile incarceration," Foreman said. "For many juveniles, drug court is the last stop before juvenile correc-

tions. They are kids we've been able to salvage from a placement that would cost \$30,000-\$35,000 a year, a piece."

Juvenile Drug Court in Maricopa County has grown since its inception.

There are two additional Superior Court judges in Maricopa County - Rebecca Albrecht and Pamela Franks - who also preside over Juvenile Drug Courts once a week.

Foreman is convinced Drug Court has been the most effective way of treating juvenile drug abuse.

"In the short term, it requires a lot of work and the decision-making process is the most intellectu-

ally challenging decision-making in court right now," Foreman said. "What juveniles go through is a triumph of the human spirit."

The conference attracted more than 1,000 judges and court officials from throughout the nation, including Gen. Barry McCaffrey, Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, who was one of the keynote speakers. The conference is planned to be an annual event.

"What you've seen is an explosion of interest," Foreman said of the conference, which drew four times more people than expected. "More people are convinced this is an important treatment modality for their community."

JUVENILE COURT JUDICIAL OFFICERS

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Judge Emmet Ronan	602.506.0438
Judge Linda Scott	602.506.2610
Judge Penny Willrich	602.506.2502
Commissioner Elizabeth Arriola	602.506.1117
Commissioner Thomas Jacobs	602.506.4203
Commissioner Elizabeth Yancey	602.506.2040

Associate Presiding Judge Pam Franks	602.506.3528
Judge Margaret Downie	602.506.5015
Judge Brian Hauser	602.506.6086
Judge William Sargeant III	602.506.3663
Judge Eileen Willett	602.506.3343
Commissioner Jane Bayham-Lesselyong	602.506.3445
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